

SOME PERTINENT REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING PEAY

By JEFF M'CARN.

The question as to what is my duty on this distracting subject, I choose at the outset of the campaign to state them beyond misunderstanding, and in simple deference to truth and candor."

Mr. Peay states further that he considers the liquor question settled in Tennessee, at least until the people discovered their mistake; but every intelligent citizen knows that the liquor question is not settled in Tennessee and never will be settled as long as the bootleggers and former liquor men and their friends are active in their efforts to sell liquor illegally or to bring about legislation friendly to light wines and beer.

I agree with the candidate, Mr. Peay, that the personal views of a candidate for the office of Governor are of great moment to the people of Tennessee at this time.

I have never been able to forget the fact that immediately after the murder of Senator Carmack on the streets of Nashville this same Austin Peay, who is now asking for the support of the friends of the dead Senator, called together his liquor committee for the purpose of devising ways and means to defeat temperance legislation and to carry on the battle in which Senator Carmack lost his life, and I am not willing to forget that immediately after this crime was committed Mr. Peay, so I am reliably informed, and was so informed at the time, went to the jail in company with members of the family of the slayers of Senator Carmack and called upon the prisoners there.

It was reported also and commonly believed that when one of the slayers of Senator Carmack received a pardon by Gov. Patterson, Mr. Peay, receiving the information, stated that the Governor had done the right thing, and that if he had been Governor he would have granted the pardon also, but would have granted it before the trial.

PARTY REACHED BACK.

There is another question on which Peay and I have never agreed, that is the liquor question. Our differences on this matter, however, did not justify my refusing to support him if he had been a humble laborer in the ranks of the liquor interest, but having occupied a high position in the fight for liquor in Tennessee and having become conspicuous on account of his being chairman of the Democratic State Executive Committee at a time when Democratic party was owned, and body, by the liquor interests, it is difficult for me to forget conspicuous part he played in the destruction of the saloon business and the liquor interest in politics of the state. If it were possible for men to separate themselves from their personal views in official conduct, Mr. Peay might rise above the record that he made in and after 1908, but on this Mr. Peay frankly admits that personal views of candidates are a great moment.

The second paragraph of his announcement as a candidate for the office of Governor of Tennessee in year 1918, he says, "He (the minor) is charged with the duty to form the General Assembly of the state of the government, and to recommend for consideration such measures as he may deem expedient, it is under this provision of our constitution that the personal views of candidates are of moment to the people." This is a frank statement one that I believe is true.

ROBINATION QUESTION.

The same announcement that I just referred to, Mr. Peay used following language: "I have not been in compulsory prohibition, that fact is generally known, and all people may know my views

on this distracting subject, I choose at the outset of the campaign to state them beyond misunderstanding, and in simple deference to truth and candor."

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It may be stated that these matters should be forgotten, and I think they ought to be forgotten, and I would not be disposed to reach back into the dark days of the last battles that legalized liquor in Tennessee and call forth images of that struggle except for the fact that the Democratic party, for whose candidates I have been voting, with one exception, for forty years, has itself reached back into those gloomy days and brought out a candidate who was the head and front of the fight against decency and clean politics in Tennessee and offered him as a candidate for the great office of Governor.

I shall not take an active part in this campaign because I am not now in politics, but I do not feel that I would be true to myself, the things for which I have stood in Tennessee for a quarter of a century, nor true to the memory of those valiant soldiers and statesmen who won this fight if I should sit quietly and allow this election to pass without entering my protest against what I deem a defamation of the character of those heroes both living and dead.

Mr. Peay, in his announcement for the office of Governor, says that he not only opposed prohibition in Tennessee, but that he opposed woman suffrage. It was unnecessary for Mr. Peay to make either of these acknowledgments, for the people already knew that he gave his utmost strength and influence to the defeat of these two progressive steps in American legislation. Looking back over Mr. Peay's record in Tennessee it is easy to understand why he should oppose woman suffrage with all his might, for after making a record like his he would naturally shudder when he thought of giving the good women of Tennessee a chance at him.

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Is Peay the Farmer's Friend?

Austin Peay, the minority nominee for Governor, has from every stump spoken boasted of his greatness, and at the same time proclaimed himself the friend and protector of the farmer. The Banner is to direct the attention of the farmers of Tennessee to the record of Austin Peay in the past that may determine for themselves whether Mr. Peay is truly the farmer's friend.

First came into public note as a member of the legislature in 1903. He was defeated in the Democratic caucus. Gen. L. D. Tyson was elected. Peay then refused to accept Tyson as the nominee. That legislature he was the champion of the back tax laws. He was the joint creator of the gentry of the most unjust outrageous back tax bill ever in Tennessee. He was a member of the Finance, Ways and Committee that introduced

this bill in the House and stood sponsor for it. He advocated its passage on the floor of the House. He voted for it. The bill for which Mr. Peay voted as a member of the legislature in 1903 is the only back tax bill ever passed in Tennessee which subjected every farm in the state to back assessment.

Five years later Mr. Peay was the chosen and trusted leader of the powerful liquor interests which spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in Tennessee in an effort to corrupt the electorate, debauch the citizenship and to perpetuate the manufacture and sale of whisky in this state. The farmers of Tennessee are temperance advocates; they are home-loving and God-fearing citizens, who have nothing in common with the nefarious liquor interests whose cause was so industriously championed by Austin Peay.

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GOV. ALF A. TAYLOR
CANDIDATE FOR SECOND TERM

Supreme Arrogance Of Mr. Austin Peay

One of the outstanding features of the present campaign for Governor in this state which has caused thousands of cautious, conservative citizens to "stop, look and listen"—and ponder seriously the temperament of the man—is the arrogant defiance of Mr. Peay toward every individual and influence in the state that does not rush quickly to his support and humbly beg his permission to vote for him. He has hurled defiance at practically everybody and everything political, official and governmental, in the state except those who are supporting him.

He defies the Federal Bureau of Good Roads, which has announced after months of daily contact with the State Highway Department that Tennessee has the best highway department in the South. He threatens the annihilation of this department. In denouncing it in his opening speech at Murfreesboro he had the following to say:

"We cannot get Federal aid without a highway department, but if we cannot have a better department we had better abandon the whole business."

Of course, Mr. Peay, a rank outsider, who perhaps has never been a visitor at the Highway Department and knows but little, if anything, of the inside workings thereof, is, owing to his superior intellectual attainments which he so often modestly admits, better qualified to pass impartial judgment on this department than is the Bureau of Good Roads, which supervises constantly the work of this and all other highway departments in the United States.

Mr. Peay goes to the radical extreme of being willing to forfeit and lose to the state of Tennessee millions of dollars annually which the Federal Government is contributing and which belong to Tennessee for the asking rather than to have the construction of highways in the hands of those who will not bow down to him politically and serve him.

Next he defies the Constitution and his oath of office. He admits that the Constitution commands that property shall be assessed at its value; he knows that his oath of office will bind him to uphold the Constitution. And yet he quotes this constitutional provision defiantly—says that he is fully aware of that provision, but with utter contempt for constitutional restrictions proclaims his opposition to it.

He declares that "the present tax

on each farmer's crop to secure the payment for fertilizers sold the farmers. Austin Peay voted for this bill. This great protector and defender of the farmer voted to give fertilizer trusts a mortgage on the crop of each farmer who bought fertilizer from these trusts.

Farmers of Tennessee would do well to compare the record of Austin Peay, the lawmaker, with the promises of Austin Peay, the candidate.

Indeed, it appears from an analysis of the vote in the primary that the farmers have already made this comparison. Mr. Peay cannot claim to be the nominee of the farmers. It appears that the farmers really supported Gov. McMinn in the primary. The farmers, in fact, had Gov. McMinn nominated until he reached Memphis. Piggly Wiggly took the nomination away from the farmers and gave it to Mr. Peay.

department is of no value to the state." This in the face of the record this department has made in putting millions of dollars worth of untaxed wealth upon the tax books of the state; this in the face of the fact that through the work of this department gigantic corporations owning millions of dollars' worth of property assessed at from 3 to 5 per cent of its value have been brought to light and made to contribute their just share of the running expenses of the state; this in the face of the fact that this department placed over \$1,000,000 worth of unassessed real estate on the tax books of Marion County alone in 1921. Included within this untaxed property was a tract of coal land of more than 10,000 acres. He defies the strong and urgent messages of Gov. Rye to the legislatures of 1915 and 1917. He defies the messages of Gov. Roberts to the legislature of 1919, although these messages were in exact keeping with the pledges upon which Gov. Rye and Gov. Roberts had both been elected.

He defies the Democratic platform of 1920, which is the only Democratic platform the party has at present.

He has defied Democratic officials generally.

He has defied organized labor. And in his speech at Shelbyville on Friday he defied the next legislature even before it was elected. He is quoted as saying, in his speech at Shelbyville that he "would veto more fool laws than a Governor ever signed in the last generation." He first undertakes to compliment the incoming legislature, and then proceeds to charge this legislature, even in advance of its election or assembling, with the passage of hundreds of fool bills which his superior wisdom will cause him to veto. He thus defiantly questions the intelligence and wisdom of the incoming legislature and tells them in advance how he is going to set their legislative actions at naught. He defies the Governors of the past who have been signing the "fool bills" which he is going to veto.

And after having defied the platform, principles, policies and practices of the Democratic party, and after having defied Governors and administrations and officials generally, he reached the very height and climax of his arrogant defiance when he brazenly announced in his speech at Winchester, and repeated in his speech at Shelbyville, "I will take this office on my own terms or not at all."

Well may we inquire upon what meat this Tennessee Caesar has fed that he hath grown so great.

The Banner candidly and frankly submits that it is an extremely dangerous thing to trust a man of such temperament with the great power of the Governor's office. He has shown a dictatorial attitude and spirit which even in advance of being trusted with power plainly reveals an intent to usurp and take unto himself all the functions of government. He proposes to make a mere rubber stamp of the legislature and to virtually not only become the Governor, but the government. The elevation of a man of such temperament to supreme power in the state is pregnant with possibilities of evil and would surely result in bitter turmoil and strife within the state which at this time should be avoided.—Nashville Banner.

INFANCY PLEA MADE BY DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE

Governor Taylor in his speeches and in a supplement carried by the various papers of the State has charged Mr. Peay with voting for and actively aiding in the passage of "the most indefensible and unjust back tax law ever passed in the history of the State," when he was a member of the Legislature in 1909. The supplement issued by Governor Taylor's headquarters, in discussing the back tax law referred to, says among other things:

This act provided that the revenue agents and back tax attorneys should back assess every farm, every home and every piece of property in the State of Tennessee which had been assessed at less than its actual cash value. At the time this bill was passed the entire property of the State was assessed at not more than one-third of its value, and this act directed the revenue agent and the back tax attorney to back assess every farm and every home in the State of Tennessee. Under this law we might have had an assessment made by the county assessors at exactly one-third the value of the property so that each taxpayer in the State would have been bearing exactly his proper share of the tax burden. The assessment might have been perfectly equalized so that each man's assessment would have represented exactly one-third of the value of his property and so that no injustice was done any taxpayer, and yet, under this bill which Mr. Peay put through the Legislature of 1903, the revenue agent could have gone out and picked out farms and homes here and there to back assess them for the difference between the assessment and the actual cash value.

To illustrate: Two farms lying side by side, each worth \$30,000, each assessed at \$10,000, so that each taxpayer was paying his proper share, yet under the Peay back tax bill the revenue agent could have picked out either one of the farms and back assessed it for \$20,000 and imposed a penalty of 15 per cent, leaving the other farm alone.

The property of the State at that time was assessed at about \$350,000,000, and was worth about \$1,000,000,000. This Peay back tax act, therefore, subjected about \$600,000,000 worth of property in the State to back assessment and provided for a penalty of 15 per cent.

The evils that grew up under this act were so outrageous and the practices were so corrupt that it resulted in a very bitter contest between Governor Patterson and Governor Cox in 1906.

Under the Peay act all you had to do was to prove the assessment against a piece of real estate and to prove its value and back assess it for the difference. . . . The present back tax system with all of its iniquities is an angel of mercy compared with this demon of oppression for which Austin Peay voted in 1903.

The Banner submits this charge against Mr. Peay's legislative record to its readers as worthy of the most earnest consideration. Undeniably that is a serious charge which Governor Taylor has laid at the door of Mr. Peay. Certainly no candidate claiming for himself the candor, consistency and mental superiority which Mr. Peay claims for himself has any right to pass it up lightly. And yet, in reply, Mr. Peay is quoted as saying in his speech at Winchester on Tuesday of the present week that if he were guilty of any such charge he "knew no more about the matter."

This is the sum total of his reply. He simply pleads the "baby act." He enters a "plea of infancy." He does not undertake to defend his record, but files a plea of confession and avoidance. He says he was the youngest member of the Legislature, and that is the only justification he offers.

The record shows that Mr. Peay was not an infant in arms at the time of his service in the Legislature of 1903. If correctly recorded, he was near 30 years of age. He was old enough, and thought he knew enough of the State's government, to be a candidate for the Speakership. It is true that he was defeated for the nomination, and it is also true that he failed to support General Tyson as the nominee for the Speakership.

He was old enough to be a member of the Finance, Ways and Means Committee, the most important committee in the Legislature.

Surely, he could not have been a beardless youth of such tender years, for we find that only five years later, to-wit, in 1908, he was sufficiently mature, skillful, shrewd, adroit and experienced to be the trusted leader of the powerful liquor interests of Tennessee when Senator Carmack led the fight against these interests which resulted in his tragic death. The liquor interests, with all the money at their command and the fierce struggles which they encountered, are not accustomed to selecting inexperienced, beardless youths of tender age to defend them and protect them from the wrath of a decent citizenship.

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The Banner is greatly astounded at this admission on the part of Mr. Peay that there was ever a time in his life when he did not claim for himself superior intellectual attainments and great wisdom. Judging from the arrogant egotism displayed during the present campaign, we had assumed that Mr. Peay was like Timothy, who "knew the Scriptures from a child up."

This paper is a pioneer in Tennessee in fighting the evils of back taxation. It has been relentless and unsparing in its opposition to the present system. So, our criticism of Mr. Peay cannot be twisted into a defense of the back tax evil in Tennessee. We earnestly desire to see its complete destruction and an honest system established for the collection of delinquent taxes. It goes without saying that some method—some compulsory arrangement—must exist to compel those to pay their taxes in this State who do not willingly do so.

Mr. Peay's record as a member of the Legislature and some of his utterances as a candidate since for Governor are calculated to make the people unwilling to follow him blindly on this subject without knowing at this time what his exact position is and what excuse he has to offer for the record he made for himself as a member of the Legislature. What guarantee can he give that, if trusted with official power, he will not repeat his record of 1903?

It is true that Mr. Peay has declared in this campaign for the destruction of the back-tax system which he created, and he says that his position is well known on this subject—that his views were stated throughout the State in his campaign in 1918. In 1918 he said:

"The appointment of these agents should be taken from the Comptroller and a system of back assessment should be devised which will permit the exercise of this power in a straightforward and satisfactory manner."

His position at that time seems to have been not to destroy the revenue agents, but simply take their appointment out of the hands of the Comptroller and place it somewhere else. He did not say where. Perhaps he wants to appoint these agents himself. This is a power "no good Governor would want and no bad Governor should have."

But the purpose of this article is to impress upon the voters the character of reply Mr. Peay made at Winchester to this serious charge made by Governor Taylor.

The Tennesseean's candidate for Governor will have to make a more satisfactory defense than to simply file a "plea of infancy." Otherwise the voters may overrule his plea on the ground of "insufficiency."—Nashville Banner.

PEAY'S BOASTING

Mr. Peay seems to forget, or doesn't know, that there are limitations to executive authority. If he could do all he claims he will do if elected Governor, he would be the envy of every ruler in the world. Bunk and hokum are the words. His claims are an insult to the intelligence of the electorate of Tennessee.—Knoxville Journal and Tribune.



W. N. BEASLEY.

W. N. Beasley, Republican nominee for Railroad and Public Utilities Commissioner, has pledged his efforts as a member of the Commission to a reduction of the exorbitant rates now charged by some of the public utilities in the State. At the instance of Mr. Beasley the Commission has made an investigation of the rates charged by street car, gas and electric light and power companies, and this investigation shows the rates are excessive. If Mr. Beasley is elected, his efforts will be to see they are reduced. He is now on a speaking tour of the State and is meeting with large crowds and great encouragement.